

Offensive War to Spread Islam

Muhammad and his successors initiated offensive wars against peaceful countries in order to impose Islam by force as well as to seize the abundance of these lands. Their objective was to capture women and children and to put an end to the poverty and hunger from which Arab Muslims suffered. So, Islam was imposed upon Syria, Jordan, Palestine (Jerusalem), Egypt, Libya, Iraq, Iran, all of North Africa, some parts of India and China, and later Spain.

Undoubtedly, the concept of an offensive war to spread the faith is a genuine Islamic concept; it is known as a Holy War for the sake of God. We will see what Muslim scholars have explicitly determined that this is the essence of Islam. They also indicate that if sufficient military power is available to Islamic countries, they ought to attack all other countries in order to force them to embrace Islam, or pay the poll tax and be subject to Islamic rule. Muhammad (as well as all the Caliphs who succeeded him) called for holy wars. All scholars and lawyers acknowledge that.

Those who say that the Islamic wars were always defensive do not understand Islam and have not read sufficient history. It should be evident that offensive wars to spread Islam are the heart of the entire religion of Islam. They embody the meaning of "Striving for the cause of God"—holy war to make the Word of God supreme over the whole world. Our study will be filled with objective quotes from the statements of scholars, along with a throng of true stories.

The Sayings and Deeds of Muhammad and His Companions

One of Muhammad's popular claims is that God commanded him to fight people until they become Muslims and carry out the ordinances of Islam. All Muslim scholars without exception agree on this. Muhammad said:

"I have been ordered by God to fight with people till they bear testimony to the fact that there is no God but Allah and that Mohammed is his messenger, and that they establish prayer and pay Zakat (money). If they do it, their blood and their property are safe from me" (see Bukhari Vol. I, p. 13).

Scholars understood this claim to mean the waging of offensive wars against unbelievers in order to force them to embrace Islam as individuals or communities. This is exactly what Muhammad himself **did** in carrying out God's commandment to him.

Azhar's Scholars in Egypt

In his book, "Jurisprudence in Muhammad's Biography", the Azhar scholar, Dr. Muhammad Sa'id Ramadan al-Buti says the following (page 134, 7th edition):

"The Holy War, as it is known in Islamic Jurisprudence, is basically an **offensive war**. ***This is the duty of Muslims in every age when the needed military power becomes available to them.*** This is the phase in which the meaning of Holy War has taken its final form. Thus the apostle of God said: 'I was commanded to fight the people until they believe in God and his message ...'"

Dr. Buti deduces from Muhammad's statement that this is the concept of offensive war—this is Holy War as it is known in Islamic jurisprudence. Notice by his statement also that this matter is a duty incumbent on every Muslim in every age. The time will come when East and West, as well as politicians and military personnel all over the world will realize that the real military danger is the Islamic community. When the needed military power becomes available to them, they will wage wars and invade other countries !

Saudi Scholars In his book, "The Method of Islamic Law", Dr. Muhammad al-Amin clearly indicates:

"No infidel [unbeliever] should be left on his land as it is denoted from Muhammad's statement: 'I was commanded to fight the people... '"

This claim by Muhammad and its generally-accepted meaning are recorded not only by these contemporary scholars in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, but are also quoted in the following sources:

- The Sahih of al-Bukhari, part I, p. 13.
- The Sahih of Muslim, part I, p. 267 (The Interpretation of the Nawawi).
- The Commentary of Ibn Kathir, p. 336
- The Muhalla (the Sweetened), Vol. 4, p. 317
- "The Ordinances of the Qur'an" by al-Shafi'i, p. 51, part II (on the authority of Abu Huraira).
- Mishkat of al-Masabih, part 1, p. 9.

Almost all major Islamic references have quoted this statement because it is one of the most famous sayings of Muhammad which he followed and which he commanded his followers to implement.

Many provocative and painful events were inflicted on individuals and tribes in the course of Muhammad's life. Muhammad, as we will see, used to exhort his followers:

"Invitation first (that is, call them first to embrace Islam). If they refuse, then war."

In other words, he told his followers not to kill anybody unless you first invite him to embrace Islam. Only if he rejects it, must he be killed. This is evident in the story of Abu Sufyan:

When Muhammad and his followers were about to attack Mecca to subjugate it to Islam, his adherents arrested Abu Sufyan, one of Mecca's inhabitants. They brought him to Muhammad. Muhammad told him: "Woe to you, O Abu Sufyan. Is it not time for you to realize that there is no God but the only God?" Abu Sufyan answered: "I do believe that." Muhammad then said to him: "Woe to you, O Abu Sufyan. Is it not time for you to know that I am the apostle of God?" Abu Sufyan answered: "By God, O Muhammad, of this there is doubt in my soul." The 'Abbas who was present with Muhammad told Abu Sufyan: "Woe to you! Accept Islam and testify that Muhammad is the apostle of God before your neck is cut off by the sword." Thus he professed the faith of Islam and became a Muslim.

There are many sources which record this story:

- Ibn Hisham, part 4, p. 11 ("Biography of the Prophet")
- "The Chronicle of the Tabari", part 2, p. 157
- Ibn Kathir, "The Prophetic Biography", part 3, p. 549, and "The Beginning and the End"
- Ibn Khaldun, the rest of part 2, p. 43 and on
- Al-Sira al-Halabiyya, Vol. 3. p. 18
- Al Road Al Anf, part 4, p. 90, by Al Sohaily

It is also mentioned and attested to by contemporary scholars such as Dr. Buti in his book, "The Jurisprudence of Muhammad's Biography", p. 277. He repeated it on page 287 because such stories incite the admiration of the Buti and bring him joy. Yet Dr. Buti feels that some people will protest, especially liberals and the civilized international society, who believe that faith in a certain creed ought not to be imposed by the threat of death. Therefore, he said (p. 287) the following:

"It may be said, 'What is the value of a faith in Islam which is a result of a threat? Abu Sufyan, one moment ago, was not a believer, then he believed after he was threatened by death.' We say to those who question: 'What is required of an infidel or the one who confuses other gods with God, is to have his tongue surrender to the religion of God and to subdue himself to the prophethood of Muhammad. But his heartfelt faith is not required at the beginning. It will come later.'"

This is God in Islam, my dear friends—a God who is satisfied with the testimony of the tongue of a person who is under the threat of death. But "the heartfelt faith" will come later! The important thing is to increase the number of Muslims either by threat or by propagation!

Dr. Buti was more than frank, and we would like to thank him for that, yet we would like to tell him that Christianity rejects the testimony of the mouth if it does not stem from faith that is rooted in the heart first. In Christianity, a person has sufficient time to think quietly before he makes his decision, as the Gospel says:

"Let each be fully convinced in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5).

God reveals His attitude in the Bible when He says:

"My son, give me your heart" (Prov. 23:26).

When the Ethiopian eunuch expressed his desire to be baptized, the evangelist Philip told him:

"If you believe with all your heart, you may" (Acts 8:37).

God even rebukes the people of Israel and says:

"These people draw near to Me with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me" (Isa. 29:13).

The story of Abu Sufyan reveals clearly that Muhammad does not care much about the faith of the heart, especially at the beginning, as Dr. Buti suggests. What is really important is that professing faith is a natural response to the threat of death. The threat is very clear: Testify that Muhammad is the apostle of God or you will be beheaded. The story concludes: Abu Sufyan professed the testimony of "truth" immediately!

In his book, "The Biography of the Apostle", part 4, Ibn Hisham says (page 134):

"Muhammad sent Khalid Ibn al-Walid to the tribe of the children of Haritha and told him: 'Call them to accept Islam before you fight with them. If they respond, accept that from them, but if they refuse, fight them.' Khalid told them: 'Accept Islam and spare your life.' They entered Islam by force. He brought them to Muhammad. Muhammad said to them: 'Had you not accepted Islam I would have cast your heads under your feet'" (refer to page 134, and also see Al Road Al Anf, part 4, pp. 217, 218. You will find the same incident).

We see in this story the main Islamic concept: First, an invitation to accept Islam, then war against those who refuse to do so. This was Muhammad's order to Khalid Ibn al-Walid. It is also noteworthy to examine Ibn Hisham's statement that "they entered Islam by force." Muhammad himself told them later: "Had you rejected Islam, I would have beheaded you and cast your heads under your feet." This was an undisputed threat: Either they accepted Islam or they would have been beheaded.

The brutal irony is that he uttered these words with ruthlessness and relentlessness instead of congratulating them on their new faith! What a strange man who failed to show any love or genuine compassion. His act was an act of a first-class terrorist. He did not congratulate them because he knew that they entered Islam by force. Is this man really the prophet of freedom, compassion, and human rights? Listen carefully! These oppressive attitudes and actions are as clear as the sun on a bright summer day. Muhammad's words are self-explanatory:

"Had you not accepted Islam I would have beheaded you and cast your heads under your feet!"

What human rights! What compassionate, kind, meek and noble characters! Undoubtedly, this alone is enough to uncover the dreadful dark side of Muhammad's character and his religion.

Azhar scholar Dr. Buti adds on p. 263 of his book:

"The apostle of God started to send military detachments from among his followers to the various Arab tribes which were scattered in the Arab Peninsula to carry out the task of calling (these tribes) to accept Islam. If they did not respond, they would kill them. That was during the 7th Hira year. The number of the detachments amounted to ten."

Would God's help be sought, Oh Muhammad, to fight peaceful tribes whose only crime was that they could not believe that you are an apostle of God? Satan (not God) assists wicked people to commit these things!

No wonder all these tribes so quickly became apostate and relinquished Islam after the death of Muhammad. Abu Bakr Al Sadiq waged the aforementioned wars to force them to re-embrace Islam. Dr. Buti states this in chapter six of his book, under the title, "New Phase of the Mission". He quotes a statement made by Muhammad which proves that those wars were offensive wars. Muhammad said, "From now on, they will not invade you, but you will invade them."

Now let us see what Muhammad's followers did who implemented the same principle:

Ali Ibn Abi Talib

In his book, "The Biography of the Prophet" (part 3, p. 113), Ibn Hisham relates this episode:

"Ali Ibn Abi Talib encountered a man called 'Umru and told him, 'I indeed invite you to Islam.' 'Umru said, 'I do not need that.' 'Ali said, 'Then I call you to fight.' (This was the same policy Muhammad used with those who rejected his invitation.) 'Umru answered him, 'What for my nephew? By God, I do not like to kill you.' 'Ali said, 'But, by God, I love to kill you'" (see Al Road Al Anf part 3, p. 263).

It is obvious from the dialogue that 'Umru does not like fighting because he does not want to kill 'Ali while he is defending himself. He wonders, "What for? I do not want to embrace Islam." But 'Ali says to him, "By God I love to kill you," and he did kill him.

We would like to conclude these stories by relating another moving episode which the Muslim Chroniclers recorded, among them, Isma'il Ibn Kathir in his book, "The Prophetic Biography" (part 3, p. 596). Ibn Kathir says that Muhammad's followers met a man and asked him to become a Muslim. He asked them, "What is Islam?" They explained that to him. He said, "What if I refuse it? What would you do to me?" They answered, "We would kill you." Despite that, he refused to become a Muslim and they killed the poor man after he went and bade his wife farewell. She continued to weep over his corpse for days until she died of grief over her slain beloved who was killed for no reason.

Dr. 'Afifi Abdul-Fattah

On the cover of his famous book, "The Spirit of Islamic Religion," which was reprinted more than nine times, it says the following, "It has been revised by the committee of Azhar scholars with introductions made by the greatest Muslim professors and judges of Islamic legal courts."

On page 382 Dr. 'Afifi says:

"Islam has approved war so that the Word of God becomes supreme. This is war for the cause of God (Holy War). Muhammad, therefore, sent his ambassadors to eight kings and princes in the neighborhood of the Arab Peninsula to call them to embrace Islam. They rejected his call. Thus, it became incumbent on the Muslims to fight them."

On page 384, we read the following:

"Islamic law demands that before Muslims start fighting infidels (unbelievers), they first deliver the message of Islam to them. It was proven that the prophet never fought people before he called them to embrace Islam first. He used to command his generals to do so also."

Dr. 'Afifi (along with the Azhar scholars who revised his book) boasts that the prophet never fought anybody before he called them to Islam first! Those people fail to realize that human rights emphasize that when you call people to embrace any religion and they refuse to do so, you must leave them alone! You are not to fight them in order to force them to accept the new religion as Muhammad and his followers did.

We did not say that Muhammad did not call them to believe in Islam first. We acknowledge that, but we blame him because whenever they rejected his invitation, he fought and killed them. Are these the human rights? Don't you understand, Dr. 'Afifi? Do Muhammad's teachings make you so blind that you fail to see the simplest principles of human rights? Do you not respect man's freedom to believe in whatever he wants? Muhammad had the right to call people to embrace Islam and to commission Khalid along with his followers to carry out this task; but he did not have the right to kill them if they refused to accept Islam.

Dr. 'Afifi says that eight kings and princes declined to accept Muhammad's mission; thus it was incumbent on the Muslims to fight them. We ask him: **Why** it was incumbent on them to fight those kings and princes? Is their refusal to accept Islam a reason for the Muslims to fight them? "Yes!" This is what all Muslim scholars say, without exception.

Let the people of the West and of the East ponder these events which took place in the course of Islamic history and during the life of Muhammad and after his death. Beware, nations of the world, for **any strong Islamic country** would implement the same policy of war to obey God's order and his messenger! !

The Saudi Scholars

In his book, "The Methodology of Islamic Law", Dr. Muhammad al-Amin says (page 17):

"God had made it clear to us that (we should) call for acceptance of Islam first, then wage war. It is not admissible to wage war before extending the invitation to embrace Islam first, **as the Qur'an says**. 'We verily sent our messenger with clear proofs and revealed to them the scripture and the balance, that mankind may observe right measure, and he revealed iron, wherein is mighty power and uses for mankind and that Allah (God) may know him who helps Him and his messengers—Allah is strong, Almighty'" (Surah Iron 57:25).

Thus, God's words are, "We sent down iron, which has powerful might", followed His saying, "We have sent our apostles with signs." This denotes that if the signs and books fail, then unleash the sword against them, as the Muslim poet said, "The Book (Qur'an) offers guidance, and he who does not turn away (from evil) by the guidance of the book, He will be kept straight by the squadrons."

The reader may be confused and want to inquire about Muhammad's policy in spreading his mission. They may question his orders to his generals and his explicit attitude towards Abu Sufyan and say, "These attitudes prove to us that Islam forces people to accept it. The case is not limited to ignoring people's freedom and confiscating their properties only or sentencing the apostate to death, but it also calls for slaying whoever rejects Islam. What is the opinion of the scholar about that? Is force used as compulsion in accepting this religion?"

The Muslim scholars say, "Yes." There is compulsion used in accepting Islam, but this applies only to pagans and those who are irreligious. For Christians and Jews, the orders are to fight them and subject them to the ordinances of Islam, making them pay a poll-tax. In this case, they are spared death and are allowed to keep their faith. They are not forced to embrace Islam because they have three options—become Muslims, fight, or pay the poll-tax. The irreligious have two options only: death or Islam. This is what the Muslim scholars say, and the Qur'an itself teaches the same.

Ibn Hazm and al-Baydawi

In volume 8, part 11, on page 196 Ibn Hazm remarks decisively,

"The prophet Muhammad did not accept from the Arab heathens less than Islam or the sword. This is compulsion of faith. No compulsion in faith (or religion) applies only to Christians or Jews because they are not to be forced to embrace the religion. They have the option either to embrace Islam, the sword, or to pay the poll-tax. In this case they can keep their own faith. It was truly said on the authority of the apostle of God that there is no compulsion in the faith.

"When the sacred months elapse, kill those who associate other gods with God, wherever you find them" (Surah 9:5).

The Imam al-Baydawi offers us (page 58 of his commentary) exactly the same interpretation.

Abu Bakr El Sadiq

In Al Road Al Anf (part 4, p. 240), Ibn Hisham indicates that Abu Bakr (the daily companion of Muhammad and among the first who believed in him) used to converse with Ibn Abu Rafi al-Ta'i and to say to him:

"God—to whom belong the might and exaltation—has sent Muhammad with this religion for which he fought until people entered this religion by hook or by crook."

This phrase, I believe, is self-explanatory—"by crook" !

The Imam al-Shafi'i

In his famous book, "The Ordinances of Qur'an" (page 50 of the second part), the Shafi'i says:

"The apostle of God defeated the people until they entered Islam by hook or by crook."

Again we have this clear declaration—"by crook". This is what actually happened.

The Qur'an Exposes the Aggressive Nature of Islam

The Qur'anic verses reveal to us the aggressive, hostile nature of the Islamic mission and of Muhammad. The Qur'an includes verses pertaining to fighting against infidels, as well as other verses related to Holy War against Christians and Jews.

Pertaining to the Infidels

"But when the sacred months elapse, then fight and slay the pagans wherever you find them and seize them, besiege them and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war). But if they repent and establish regular prayers, and practice regular charity, then open the way for them for Allah is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful" (Surah 9:5).

How did Muslim scholars and chroniclers interpret this verse in order to understand what Muhammad did after the conquest of Mecca and its occupation?

The Jalalan

In this commentary, which was published by the Azhar in 1983 (page 153), the authors say decisively,

"The chapter of Repentance was revealed to raise the level of security which the infidels enjoyed because Muhammad had earlier made a covenant with them not to kill them. After that, this verse was given (9:5) in order to free God and Muhammad from any covenant with the infidels. It gives them four months in which they will be protected, but by the end of the four months (the end of the grace period), the order comes: Kill the infidels wherever you find them. Capture them, besiege them in their castles and fortresses until they are forced to accept Islam or be killed."

As you see, this verse was inspired in order to free Muhammad (and God) from any peaceful and protective covenant which Muhammad made with the people of Mecca, as if the covenant were shameful behavior from which Muhammad (and his God) must free themselves. Nothing remains after that, except the pledge of war and massacre, as Ibn Hisham says later.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's book was published in Saudi Arabia (second edition) in 1981. In part 5, p. 90, this famous scholar tells us the following:

"When the prophet migrated from Mecca to Medina, God ordered him to fight those who fought him only. Then when the chapter of Repentance was revealed, God commanded His prophet to fight anyone who did not become a Muslim from among the Arabs, whether (that person) fought him or not. He did not command him to take the poll-tax from infidels."

This means that Arabs did not have a choice. They either had to embrace Islam or die by the sword. It is obvious then that God (according to the above interpretation) had ordered His prophet to fight anyone from among the Arabs who refused to become a Muslim whether he fought against Muhammad or not. This is overt aggression and unjustified attack against peaceful people.

Ibn Hisham: - Al Sohaily

In his book, "al-Rawd al-Anaf" which is the most famous book about Muhammad's life (part 4, p. 194), we read the following text:

"When Muhammad conquered Mecca and the Arabs realized that they were not able to wage war against Muhammad, they accepted the Islamic faith. But some of the infidels continued to be as they were. (They used to make pilgrimages also because this practice was in vogue among the people hundreds of years before Muhammad). Then suddenly Muhammad sent someone to announce to the Tribe of Quraysh that no pilgrimage would be allowed for the infidels after that

year (9H); none would enter paradise unless he were a Muslim. Muhammad was going to give the infidels a respite for four months, and after that there would not be a covenant except the covenant of the sword and war (lit: piercing and the strike of the sword). After this period, people entered Islam by hook or by crook, and anyone who did not become a Muslim fled the Arabian Peninsula."

Ibn Hisham already quoted Muhammad's famous words:

"No two religions are to exist in the Arab Peninsula" (pp. 50, 51).

Ibn Kathir, Al-Baydawi-al-Tabari (The Pillars of Islam)

Isma'il Ibn Kathir reiterates the above interpretation on page 336 of his commentary. He also asserts that this verse (9:5) is the verse of the sword which abrogated any previous covenant between the prophet and the infidels. On pp. 246 and 247, the Baydawi borrows Ibn Kathir's explanation and indicates to us the four months which were Shawal, Dhu al-Qu'da, Dhu al-Hijja and Muharram. The Baydawi adds that after the elapse of these four months, the infidels must be taken as prisoners lest they enter Mecca. In this case, they don't have any choice except either to embrace Islam or to be killed. Al Tabari said the same words and the same explanation on p. 206, 207 of his commentary dar-el-Sheroq.

Dr. Muhammad Sa'id al-Buti

We would like to conclude our discussion about this verse by referring to the opinion of one of the most eminent scholars of Azhar and the Islamic world. In his book, "The Jurisprudence of the Biography", he says,

"The verse (9:5) does not leave any room in the mind to conjecture about what is called defensive war. This verse asserts that Holy War which is demanded in Islamic law, **is not defensive war** (as the Western students of Islam would like to tell us) because it could legitimately be an offensive war. That is the apex and most honorable of all Holy wars" (pp. 323, 324).

Dr. Sa'id, I wish that Westerners would actually believe your statement! I wish that Western people would drop any notion that Holy war is a defensive war! You really astonish me, though, because you regard the offensive war designed to spread the faith to be legal as if you had never heard of an agency in New York called the United Nations or of human rights. You even say that offensive war is "the apex and the most honorable Holy War" among all wars!

Pertaining to the People of the Book

Explicitly and shamelessly, the Qur'an declares (Chapter of Repentance, 9:29),

"Fight against those who have been given the scripture but believe not in Allah nor the last day, and who forbid not that which Allah has forbidden by His messenger, and who follow not the religion of truth, until they pay the tribute willingly, being brought into submission" (p. 182, English copy by Saudi Arabian scholars).

Muslim scholars have agreed on the interpretation of this transparent verse by which all the Muslim warriors were guided in their offensive, violent wars against peaceful people.

The Baydawi

In his book, "The Lights of Revelation", a commentary on the Qur'an, he remarks,

"Fight Jews and Christians because they violated the origin of their faith and they do not believe in the religion of the truth, namely Islam, which abrogated all other religions. Fight them until they pay the poll-tax with submission and humiliation" (page 252).

The Tabari

On page 210, the Tabari declares in his commentary that this verse is referring in particular to the people of the Book and has direct relation to the preceding verse (9:28). He said that the reason for the revelation of this verse (9:29) was that God had prohibited infidels from coming to the mosque for pilgrimage any more. They used to come with food and to trade. Muslims said, "Then, where we can get food?" They were afraid of poverty; thus God gave this verse so that they could collect money (the poll-tax) from the people of the Book.

This same interpretation is also found in the "Biography of the Apostle" by Ibn Hisham (p. 104 in part 4), and in the Jalalan. The rest of the scholars agree upon this interpretation. I would like to quote here the text of the two verses (9:28-29) because they really complement each other. The Qur'an says:

"O ye who believe! Truly the pagans are unclean, so let them not approach the sacred Mosque after this year, and if ye fear poverty, soon will Allah enrich you (if He wills) out of His bounty for Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise ... fight against the people of the Book" (to the end of verse 29).

The Tabari adds:

"The meaning of the Qur'anic statement: '... until they pay the poll-tax with submission and humiliation' (literally: to pay by hand and with forced submission) is that the Muslim will receive the tax imposed on Christians and Jews while he is sitting and they are standing. He will take it from their own hands since the Christian or the Jew should not send the money with a

messenger but come himself and stand to pay it to the Muslim who will be sitting. The saying, 'with forced submission', also means with humiliation" (page 210).

The Jalalan (Al Suyti and 'Al Mahally)

On page 156, we find the same words and interpretation stated by the Tabari. Then he adds:

"The order to fight the people of the Book is because they do not prohibit what the apostle had forbidden such as wine."

Then he explains the humiliating procedure by which Christians have to pay the poll-tax—exactly as the Tabari described it.

Ibn Hisham Al Sohaily

In his book, "The Biography of the Apostle" (Al Road Al Anf, part 4, p. 201), Ibn Hisham repeats the above-mentioned quotation and adds,

"The poll-tax is to be paid by the Christian or the Jew forcibly and submissively. It is to spare their lives; that is, they pay it in lieu of being killed because if they did not pay it, they would be killed unless they intended to become Muslims, then they would be exempted from paying it."

The Shafi'i:

Lastly, we would like to refer to the Shafi'i's statement in his book, "The Ordinances of the Qur'an" (part 2, p. 50),

"The apostle of God killed and captured (many) of the people of the Book until some of them embraced Islam, and he imposed the poll-tax on some others."

For God's sake, Muhammad! You killed and captured Jews and Christians, who believe in one God—the followers of Moses and Jesus—and forced them either to embrace Islam or to pay the poll-tax!

In the same book and part, the Shafi'i summarizes the entire situation, whether in relation to infidels or to the people of the Book. He says,

"From idolaters and those who associate other gods with God, the poll-tax is not to be accepted. Either they believe in Islam or be killed, but the people of the Book can pay the poll-tax with submission and humiliation whether they are Arabs or non-Arabs" (pp. 52,53).

The Shafi'i adds in the same source (pp. 62-64) saying,

"When the people of Islam became strong enough, God revealed the chapter of Repentance and ordained the fight against the people of the book until they pay the poll-tax."

If the reader wonders why, I would remind him of what the Tabari and Ibn Hisham said—Muslims were afraid of poverty and they wanted to acquire properties and bounties. Thus the Qur'an explained, "If you fear poverty, soon will Allah enrich you if He wills, out of His bounty...Fight... the people of the Book... until they pay the poll-tax."

Isn't this the same as crimes committed by bandits and pirates? Yet, this is exactly what Muhammad used to do. On various occasions, Muhammad himself attacked the caravans (or he would order his followers to do so) to plunder them.

In short, Islamic law calls for the death penalty for apostates and forces peaceful infidels (unbelievers) either to accept Islam or be killed. If they are the people of the Book, they have a choice either to be killed, to become Muslims, or to pay the poll-tax in humiliation.

Where are human rights? Where is respect for the individual's freedom to choose the faith he wants?

Contemporary Muslim Scholars Concur on the Principle of Offensive War

In addition to the foregoing quotations, I would like to add some statements which may have more bearing for international readers. I will include many other declarations quoted from publications of the Liberation Party in Jerusalem as made by another Muslim scholar.

"The Jurisprudence of the Biography" by al-Buti (7th ed.) published by the Azhar in Egypt

This book was revised by Al Azhar, so it is accepted by all Muslims and is well-known all over the Islamic world. It deals with Muhammad's biography, interprets it and comments on the most famous events of his life. The author states (page 324) that the offensive war is legal. He literally uses these words,

"The concept of Holy War in Islam does not take into consideration whether (the war is) a defensive or an offensive war. Its goal is the exaltation of the Word of God and the construction of Islamic society and the establishment of God's Kingdom on Earth regardless of the means. The means would be offensive warfare. In this case it is the apex, the most noble Holy War. It is legal to carry on a Holy War."

The implications are plain enough—there is no need for comment. Then he adds on p. 242,

"Defensive warfare in Islam is nothing but a phase of the Islamic mission which the prophet practiced. After that, it was followed by another phase; that is, calling all people to embrace Islam so that nothing less would be acceptable from atheists and those who associate other

deities with God than that they embrace Islam. Also, nothing would be acceptable from the people of the Book except conversion to Islam or being subjugated to Muslim rule. In addition, there is the command to fight anyone who attempts to stand in its way. Now, after the domination of Islamic rule is in place, and its mission complete, it is meaningless (in regard to Holy War) to (talk about) defensive wars, as some of the researchers do. Otherwise, what does Muhammad's statement mean (as it is related by the Bukhari), 'They would not invade you, but you invade them'?"

It is obvious that defensive warfare was a temporary phase in Muhammad's strategy. After that, a second phase followed which was offensive war, a legal tool for holy war. In this phase, people were not left to enjoy their status quo, but were invaded and they suffered the horrors of the war, though they did not attempt to start a war or to invade the Muslims. It is as Muhammad said: "They will not invade you, but you are those who will invade them." Why? Is it an order to impose Islam on infidels or to kill them? Or (as is the case with the people of the Book) are they either to accept Islam, fight a war, or surrender and pay the poll-tax with humiliation?

This is an explicit declaration and Dr. Buti does not hide the truth. To the contrary, he boasts of it and asserts that it is wrong to regard Islamic wars as defensive wars. He insists that this is a false concept which some researchers have reiterated along with Western nations in order to halt the Islamic march.

Let the entire world listen to the opinion of one of the most famous Muslim scholars from the Azhar University as he demands the resumption of war to conquer the world. He says (pages 265 and 266),

"The concept by which the mission directed itself from the beginning of Muhammad's migration to Medina to the Hudaibiyya treaty, was simply a defensive phase of the plan. During this stage, the prophet did not initiate an attack or start an invasion, but after the treaty of Hudaibiyya, the prophet intended to enter a new, essential phase in accordance with Islamic law. This was the phase of fighting those who heard the message but arrogantly rejected it. This phase, by the act of Muhammad and his word, has become a legal decree, according to Muslims in every age until the day of resurrection!"

I wonder, "Why should Muhammad fight them? Is it because they rejected his faith that he should fight with them?" The Azhari scholar answers, "Yes, because they arrogantly refused to believe in him, so he added that this new stage of war; that is, the phase of fighting unbelievers. This came after the completion of the defensive period which followed the treaty of Hudaibiyya. It has become (according to Muslims) legal in every age until the day of resurrection."

Dr. Buti continues:

"...This is the concept which professional experts of thought attempt to conceal from the eyes of Muslims by claiming that anything that is related to a holy war in Islamic law is only based on defensive warfare to repel an attack" (page 266).

Many have thought as much, but it is obvious from this statement that defensive warfare is an attempt made by Western thinkers to hide from the eyes of Muslims the reality of offensive warfare. If we wonder why Western thinkers do that, Dr. Buti answers this question on the same page 266 saying,

"It is no secret that the reason behind this deception is the great fear which dominates foreign countries (East and West alike) that the idea of Holy War for the cause of God would be revived in the hearts of Muslims, then certainly, the collapse of European culture will be accomplished. The mind set of the European man has matured to embrace Islam as soon as he hears an honest message presented. How much more will it be accepted if this message is followed by a Holy War?"

Have European, American and Eastern people—as well as the governments of the World—read these obvious words? We have been led to believe that Muhammad and his followers only waged defensive wars. Yet here they declare that **defensive warfare** was a temporary strategy at the beginning of Islam. Six years after Muhammad's departure from Mecca to

Medina, a new phase has begun; namely, **offensive warfare**. Muslims are concerned that the popular notion that Islamic wars were nothing more than defensive wars is a deception invented by the people of the West to divert Muslims away from allowing the dream of Holy War to be revived in their hearts. The West is afraid that the Islamic dream would set off a holy, offensive war in order to establish God's state on Earth (an Islamic government) and to make God's word supreme. Then Western civilization would collapse.

There is no need to comment further on these statements, but I would like to tell Dr. Buti something: If the mind set of the European man is potentially ready to embrace Islam, it is because he is not exposed to the reality of Islam or who Muhammad really was. Only such books as ours will remove the Islamic deceptive veils. If real Islam is truly exposed, it will be **eradicated** not only in Europe, America, Asia and Africa, but also in Arab countries as well. People will re-examine the reality of this religion and the prophethood of this Arabic man called Muhammad.

We tell you, Dr. Buti, that powerful foreign countries are not afraid of Arab countries and Islamic states which do not have modern technology because one strong foreign country can annihilate all these countries. If the state of Israel alone is able to exhaust all the Arab countries, how much more can other powerful foreign countries do so? If foreign countries claim that Islamic wars were defensive wars, that is because **they have been deluded** and have believed the deception, but praise be to God for people like you who expose the ugly truth to them.

You have demonstrated to them that holy war in Islam is a **continuing ideal** which will last to the day of resurrection. It is a plan in which it is incumbent on all Muslims to fight (in the cause of God) those who reject Islam. This concept started in the sixth year of the Hegira and continues to the present.

As Dr. Buti endeavors to justify the principle of offensive warfare, he remarks that offensive war is the most noble of all wars and the verses (chapter 9:29 and 9:5) do not leave any room in the imagination for defensive warfare. He addresses his readers,

"You may wonder now: Where is the wisdom of forcing infidels and their associates to embrace Islam? How could the mind set of the twentieth century understand such matters? The answer is: We wonder where the wisdom is when the state forces an individual to be subjugated to its system and philosophy despite the freedom he possesses? How can it be reasonable for the state to have the right to subjugate its citizens to the laws, principles, and ordinances it enacts, while the creator of all does not have the right to subjugate them to His authority and to convert them from every creed or faith to His religion?" (pages 266 and 267).

I would like to ask you, Dr. Sa'id El Buti, you who are a contemporary scholar at the Azhar University: How can people of the twentieth century understand and accept your logic of imposing a certain religion on a person with the death penalty as the only alternative? Would it not be more reasonable for Muslims to understand and accept the concept of human rights and the freedom to embrace the creed a person wishes to believe, in accordance with his conviction? We take into consideration your circumstances and we understand that you would be likely to defend Islam and the Qur'an. You would be likely to defend Muhammad's behavior, sayings and all that his companions and successors did, but let me tell you that twentieth century thinking rejects your attitude.

On the other hand, who told you that the state and its rulers have the right to impose regulations and systems on their citizens as they wish? Don't you know that the people of modern countries in Europe and America **vote** on the constitution they feel is appropriate for them? They even **elect** their rulers as well as the people's assemblies, such as parliament. The people in these democratic countries have the authority to remove the leaders of the state if they fail to act in accordance with their constitutions which were established by free elections and public vote.

Maybe you are comparing yourself to the governments of underdeveloped countries (like most of the Arab and Islamic countries) which are characterized by the rule of one individual, tyranny, terrorism and the neglect of human rights. Woe to the one who opposes the ruler or dares to change his Islamic religion! Some Islamic countries subject him to Islamic law, and carry out the orders of Muhammad and his successors by sentencing him to death immediately. Other countries are content to put him in jail and torment him for a while.

Dr. Sa'id, what makes you think that God's character is similar to the character of the rulers of these tyrannical states? We pray that the time will come when there is freedom for evangelism and the preaching of the Gospel in the Arab world for the benefit of the Arab people—first and last. We also pray that the rulers of the Arab countries will become like Gorbachev, the former ruler of Russia, who guaranteed religious freedom and opened wide the door of human rights and individual freedom.

God (the only eternal, true God) is not the one who exists in your mind or the one about whom Muhammad preached, but He is the God of love and freedom. He is the God of Christian revelation. The true God is not a God who demands that a poll-tax be paid to Muhammad, or a

God of capturing women and children, or of slaughtering the men of peaceful towns if they do not become Muslims Yours is an imaginary God who does not exist. The true God says,

"Let the one who thirsts, come. And the one who desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22: 17).

He also says,

"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, "Come, buy and eat ... let your soul delight itself in abundance" (Isa. 55:1-2).

Arab Scholars in Jerusalem

"The Book of the Islamic State" by Taqiy al-Din al-Nabahan was published in 1953. It encapsulates the entire issue in simple, plain style and in explicitly few words. It will suffice to quote four self-explanatory paragraphs which need no comment because they are obvious.

On pages 112, 113, and 117, Taqiy al-Din says,

"The foreign policy of Islamic states must be to carry the Islamic mission to the world by way of holy war. This process has been established through the course of the ages from the time the apostle settled down until the end of the last Islamic state which was ruled by Islamic law. This process has never been changed at all. The apostle Muhammad, from the time he founded the state in the city Yathrib, prepared an army and began holy war to remove the physical barriers which hinder the spread of Islam.

"He subdued the tribe of Quraysh as a body, along with other similar groups until Islam prevailed all over the Arabian peninsula. Then the Islamic state started to knock at the doors of other states to spread Islam. Whenever it found that the nature of the existing system in these states was a barrier which prevented the spread of the mission, they saw it as inevitable that the system be removed. **So holy war continued as a means of spreading Islam. Thus by holy war, countries and regions were conquered. By holy war, kingdoms and states were removed and Islam ruled the nations and peoples.**

"The glorious Qur'an has revealed to Muslims the reasons for fighting and the ordinance of holy war and it declares that it is to carry the message of Islam to the entire world. There are several verses which command the Muslims to fight for the cause of Islam. Therefore, carrying the Islamic mission is the basis on which the Islamic state was established, the Islamic army was founded, and holy war was ordained. All the conquests were achieved accordingly. Fulfilling the Islamic mission will restore the Islamic state to the Muslims."

Then he adds on pages 113, 114, and 115,

"If holy war is the established, unchangeable means of spreading Islam, then political activities become a necessity before initiating the fight. If we besiege the infidels, we would call them to embrace Islam first. If they accept Islam, they become part of the Islamic community, but if they

reject Islam, they have to pay the poll-tax. If they pay it, they spare their blood and properties, but if they refuse to pay the poll-tax, then fighting them becomes lawful."

Readers, please note that these same words and principles are confirmed **by all the Muslim scholars** who are well acquainted with the saying and deeds of Muhammad and his successors.

On pages 115 and 116 Taqi al-Din indicates again this historical statement,

"The Islamic system is a universal system, thus it was natural that it would spread, and natural that countries would be conquered. Here the apostle is receiving from Muslims the pledge of 'aqaba the Second, making a pact with him to fight all people. Those Muslims were the core of the army of the Islamic state whose military task was to carry the Islamic mission. The apostle of God had designed the plan of conquest before his death, then after him, his successors undertook the responsibility of implementing this plan when they started conquering the countries. Later, the Islamic conquests followed successively on this basis. People's resistance or rejection does not matter because the Islamic system is for all people in all countries."

Let the reader ponder these words and judge for himself. **"People's resistance or rejection does not matter because Islam is for all people"**; namely, by force, conquest, and war.

But I would like to state here that Christianity is also a universal system, and it is for all people. Christ said,

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature..." (Mark 16:15).

Anyone who believes will be saved and whoever does not believe, God will judge. Christ did not say, "Go into the world and preach. Whoever believes becomes one of us, and whoever does not believe should pay the poll-tax to the Christian army or be put to death." He did not say that! This is a crucial difference, my dear reader, between Christ and Muhammad, between Christianity and Islam.

The Bloody History of Islam

Having surveyed the incidents which took place during the life of Muhammad, it is appropriate to mention the events which occurred after his death and how the Caliphs who succeeded him carried out the same Muhammadic principle and the Qur'anic instructions. The history of Islam talks to us with two bloodied hands—first is the blood of peaceful people who safely inhabited the land until they were invaded by the Muslim armies which marched from the Arab Peninsula after the death of Muhammad. In the name of spreading the religion, they killed millions of people, and in the name of exalting the word of God, they plundered properties and divided the "booty" of women and children among themselves, the same as Muhammad did in the course of his campaigns. These Arab Islamic armies obeyed Muhammad's orders and the Qur'anic commands. They believed that spreading Islam and taking the material abundance came from God. The Qur'an explicitly says,

"Allah promises you much booty (spoils of war) that you will capture" (Chapter 48:20).

Muslim scholars do not negate these historically confirmed facts, but rather they brag about them, and their books (both old and modern) are filled with the details of these events. They mention them with pride, and they are glad to explain and demonstrate how the Arab Islamic armies attacked all the Persian lands and part of the Byzantine territories and occupied them. They could tell you how these armies took over Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, Turkey, and, of course, Libya and all of Africa until the Muslim army reached the borders of China and the regions of Iran. Even Spain had fallen into their hands for hundreds of years. They proceeded then toward France, but they were stopped in the battle of Tours at the hands of Charles Martel. These wars were offensive wars of the first degree. Islam dominated these countries. Nowadays, all Muslim countries belong to the under-developed third world.

Before we let the Muslim chroniclers narrate to us what happened, it is fit here to clarify a very significant issue about which many people inquire.

The Cross Denounces the Crusades

These were bitter wars led by the princes of Europe for a period of time without any justification except ruthlessness of the heart and faithlessness of those leaders, who (despite their claims that they were attempting to deliver the Christians in the Islamic East from the persecution of the Muslims) were not true believers in Christ or in His teachings. Where in the Gospel do we find any call for war? In this study, we compare Christ with Muhammad, the Gospel with the Qur'an, the sublime teaching of Christianity with the clear teachings of Islam.

- Did Christ lead any war to spread the faith, to divide the booty and to capture women to enslave them for himself and for his followers?
- Did Christ order His followers to do so?
- Did he order Peter to sheath his sword when he unsheathed it and struck the servant of the Jewish high priest when Christ's enemies hastened to arrest him?
- Did Christ's successors and disciples wage wars and march into battle to take poll-taxes and to spread Christianity?

These are the conclusive questions which reveal the difference between Christ and Muhammad, between Christianity and Islam. If some Christians came after hundreds of years had elapsed and committed such detestable things, Christ and Christianity would certainly denounce such deeds. On the other hand, the Islamic wars were waged by Muhammad himself, then by his relatives and companions who lived with him day after day and to whom he promised paradise.

The other important thing is that they were executing the unequivocal teachings of both Muhammad and the Qur'an which we mentioned previously in this chapter. We have many books which all talk thoroughly and in detail about the offensive wars. The most famous of these books is "The Chronicles of Al-Tabari, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Kathir" and "The History of the Caliphs" by the Suyuti. The entire Islamic world relies on these books.

Among the contemporary scholars who rely on these sources and quote from them is Dr. Abu Zayd Shalabi, professor of civilization at the Azhar University. His respected book, "al-Khulafa' al-Rashidun" The Rightly Guided Caliphs", or successors) from which we quoted when we discussed the wars of apostasy, examines these things. We have selected a few quotations from these sources and references because they almost all repeat each other. These events are well-known and confirmed by all Muslims. They are taught in the public schools in all the Islamic countries, especially in the Arab world.

"The Rightly Guided Caliphs" by Dr. Abu Zayd Shalabi

Dr. Abu Zayd Shalabi discusses the Islamic wars which were initiated by the four caliphs who succeeded Muhammad and who, at the same time, are his favored relatives. These caliphs are: Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Ali. Muhammad married 'Aisha, daughter of Abu Bakr, and Hafesa, daughter of 'Umar. 'Uthman married Ruqayya, the daughter of Muhammad, then after her death, he married her sister Um Kalthum. 'Ali was married to Muhammad's youngest daughter, Fatima al-Zahra.

On pages 35-38, Dr. Abu Zayd remarks,

"Muhammad had prepared an army to invade the borders of Syria. When Muhammad died Abu Bakr sent an army headed by Usama Ibn Zayd and 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab. The army marched towards southern Palestine and invaded some parts of the land, frightened the people and captured some booty."

At the beginning of page 70, Dr. Abu Zayd talks about the Islamic conquests and indicates that at the inception of the year 12 of Hajira, Abu Bakr ordered Khalid Ibn al-Walid to invade Persian lands and to seize the ports near Iraq. Khalid marched with the army, but before he started the war, he sent his famous message to Hermez, one of the Iraqi generals, "Embrace Islam, or pay the poll-tax, or fight." The Hermez declined to accept any of these terms but war. The Persians were defeated in this battle and Khalid seized the booty and sent Abu Bakr one-fifth of the spoils of war, exactly as they were accustomed to send to Muhammad. One-fifth of the booty belonged to God and to Muhammad.

Abu Bakr presented Khalid with the Hermez's tiara which was inlaid with gems. Dr. Abu Zayd says the value of the gems amounted to 100,000 dirham (p. 73). After that, the successful, savage invasions continued against other countries which could not repel the forces of Islam. This Azhar scholar tells us that in the battle of Alees which took place on the border of Iraq, Khalid killed 70,000 people! He was so brutal in his attack that the nearby river was mixed with their blood (p. 75).

On p. 77, Dr. Abu Zayd mentions another country which surrendered to Khalid. Khalid demanded that they pay 190,000 dirhams. When he attacked Ayn al-Tamr in Iraq, its people took shelter in one of the fortresses. Khalid laid siege to the fortress and forced them to come out. He killed all of them mercilessly. They had done nothing against him or against the Muslims except that they refused to embrace Islam and to recognize Muhammad as an apostle of God. The

Muslims seized all that they found in the fortress along with forty young men who were studying the Gospel. Khalid captured them and divided them among the Muslims (refer to p. 81).

It is well-known that Khalid Ibn al-Walid was a very brutal, vicious man. His relentlessness made 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab ask Abu Bakr to kill him or at least to depose him because he killed another Muslim in order to marry his wife! Abu Bakr did not listen, but when 'Umar became the second caliph, he deposed him immediately. This was 'Umar's opinion about Khalid. Yet, to Muhammad, the prophet of Muslims, Khalid was one of the best among his relatives and warriors.

On page 134, Abu Zayd relates that when Khalid besieged another town called Qinnasrin which belonged to the Byzantine Empire, its people were so afraid that they hid themselves from him. He sent them a message in which he said: "Even if you hide in the cloud, God will lift us up to you or He will lower you down to us." They asked for a peace treaty, but he refused and killed them all. Then he eradicated the town. These are the words of Dr. Abu Zayd which we faithfully relay to you.

Dr. Abu Zayd continues to list the names of the towns and the regions which the Islamic army invaded after the fall of 'Ain al-Tamr. He says:

"By the end of the year 12, Hajira Abu Bakr became interested in Syria (Al Sham). He issued orders to four of his great generals and designated for each one of them a country which he was given to invade. He assigned Damascus to Yazid, Jordan to Sharhabil, Homs to Abu 'Ubayda and Palestine to 'Umru Ibn al-'As.

We wonder: Are these wars defensive wars or are they definitely offensive wars and unjustified military invasions? Abu Bakr's era ends during the famous battle of Yarmick in which tens of thousands were slain for no reason except to impose religion by force, capturing women and plundering the properties. Muslims claim that Abu Bakr died from eating poisoned food a few months before.

When 'Umar was elected to the Caliphate, he deposed Khalid Ibn al-Walid and replaced him immediately with Abu 'Ubayda.

The Caliphate (ruling period) of 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab

The Invasion of Persia

'Umar Ibn al-Khattab sent Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas to invade Persia. He camped in al-Qaddisia near the river Euphrates. Dr. Abu Zayd narrates for us a very important incident (pages 117-118) which we would like to examine. The author says:

"Sa'd sent some of his followers (among them the Mu'man Ibn Maqrin to Yazdagird, one of the Persian generals) who asked him, 'What enticed you and brought you to invade us?' (Ibn

Maqrin) said to him, 'Choose for yourself either Islam or the poll-tax or the sword.' The Persian general became very angry and said to him, 'Had it not been (the custom that messengers should not be killed), I would have killed you. Go; you have nothing to do with me.'"

Ibn Khaldun confirms this incident in the end of the second volume of his famous history book (pages 94-96). He says,

"Rustan, the Persian general, said to one of Sa'd's messengers, 'You were poor and we used to provide you with plenty of food. Why do you invade us now?'"

It was obvious that the Persians had never thought to invade the Arabs, but they used to send them plenty of food because of the poverty of the Arab peninsula. Never-the-less, the Arabs seized the opportunity to invade Persia after they realized that the Persians had been weakened by its wars with the Byzantine Empire and their own internal problems. Thus, they repaid compassion with wickedness and goodness with evil. The question which the Persian general Sa'd asked was a logical one, "Why do you attack us? Did we mistreat you?" The answer was also very clear, "You have three options!" Dr. Abu Zayd says on in p. 123:

"Sa'd seized (after the battle of Qadisiyya) all that was in the treasury of Khusro of money and treasure. It was so plentiful that each Arab horseman received 12,000 dirham."

The Invasion of Damascus

On pages 131 and 132 of the same book, "The Rightly Guided Caliphs," the author indicates,

"Abu 'Ubayda marched towards Damascus and besieged it for seventy nights. He cut off all supplies while its inhabitants were pleading for help and assistance. Then Khalid attacked the city and massacred thousands of people. (They were forced) to ask for a peace treaty. Abu 'Ubayda turned over the rule of Damascus to Yazid and ordered him to invade the neighboring (cities). He attacked Sidon, Beirut, and others."

The Attack on Jerusalem

On pages 136 and 137, we read about the attack of 'Umru Ibn al-'as on Jerusalem. He besieged it for four months. Then its Christian inhabitants agreed to pay the poll-tax and to surrender to 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab, the caliph. 'Umar made the trip to Jerusalem and laid the foundation of the mosque. With that, the conquest of Syria was accomplished, but as the pestilence (plague) raged, many of the high-ranking generals of the Islamic army died, among them Abu Ubayda, Yazid and Sharahbil.

The Invasion of Wealthy Egypt

On pages 141 and 142, the author narrates how the invasion and occupation of Egypt were accomplished. Among the justifications which 'Umru Ibn al-'As presented to 'Umar which convinced him to allow 'Umru to attack Egypt were the following:

"Egypt's abundance and yields are plentiful. The conquest of Egypt would gain for the Muslims a foothold in Syria and make it easier for them to invade Africa to spread Islam."

It is important to mark 'Umru's statement that "Egypt's abundance and yields are plentiful." Eventually Egypt and Africa were both conquered.

On pages 145 and 146, the professor of civilization at the Azhar relates how 'Umru besieged the Fortress of Babylon (south of ancient Egypt) for a full month, and that he said to the messengers of the Muqawqis, the governor of Egypt,

"There is nothing between us and you except three things:

(1) Embrace Islam, become our brethren and you will have what we have and you will be subjected to what we are subjected (in this case they would pay alms to the treasury of the state).

(2) If you refuse that, you are obligated to pay tribute with humiliation.

(3) War.

"The Muqawqis attempted to offer them something different, but they rejected it. At last, after a fight, he accepted the second condition, namely to pay tribute and to be subjugated to Islamic rule. The Muslims entered Egypt. "

On page 147 and 148 Abu Zayd describes the conquest of Alexandria and denies that the Muslims burned the famous library of Alexandria. Yet he admits that many chroniclers have mentioned that 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab ordered 'Umru to burn it entirely.

[Web editor's note: Abu Zayd is right in this. This story is a false rumor. See [this page](#).]

After the conquest and the occupation of Egypt, the author says (page 151) that 'Umru wanted to secure this conquest from the west by conquering Tripoli of Libya, and from the south by seizing Ethiopia. Thus at the close of the year 21 H. as Ibn Khaldun and Yaqut al-Kindi remarked (that is in the first half of the year 643 A.D. as Ibn al Athir and other chroniclers said), "'Umru marched on with his horsemen towards Tripoli."

On page 153 he adds:

"'Umru besieged Tripoli for a month. It was a well-fortified city. At last a group of Muslims infiltrated the city and fought some of the Byzantines who soon fled. 'Umar entered the city and captured all that was in it, then he assailed the city of Sabra without warning and conquered it by force. He seized all that could be seized from it. Then he sent his army to Ethiopia, but he failed to enter it and suffered great losses. The skirmishes continued until a peace treaty was signed during the time of 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan."

Are these wars considered defensive? What is an offensive war then?

During the Caliphate of ' Uthman Ibn 'Affan

On pages 167 and 168, the book tells us:

"'Uthman ordered 'Abdalla Ibn Abi al-Sarh to invade Africa, then he sent Abdalla Ibn al-Zubayr. They slaughtered thousands of the people among them their king, Jayan, and they captured booty."

These are the words of Dr. Abu Zayd in his famous book, "The Rightly Guided Caliphs". We have quoted him word for word. Let the reader ponder these words and judge for himself. What is the crime of these people, whether in Africa or Syria or Egypt or in other countries? Muslims say—That was for the exaltation of God's word. God the compassionate, the Merciful!

The Wars to spread Islam

On pages 66 and 67 Dr. Abu Zayd confesses clearly,

"The thing which compelled Abu Bakr to invade Persia and the Byzantine Empire **was not to seize their abundance, but rather to spread Islam**. This claim is based on evidence that the generals of the Islamic armies used to call the countries to embrace Islam before they started fighting them. Khalid Ibn al-Walid sent a message to the princes of Persia saying:

"After all, accept Islam and you will be safe, or pay the tribute; otherwise I will come to you with a people who desire death as you desire drinking wine."

Yes and no, Dr. Abu Zayd! Yes, we accept your confession that the war was to spread Islam. We agree that spreading Islam was an essential incentive for war. We are content with **your unequivocal confession** in regard to this matter. We have written these pages in order to denote these facts and nothing more—to prove that Islam was spread by sword and that the Islamic wars were offensive wars. Your confirmation and faithful narration of history in "The Rightly Guided Caliphs" have helped us to prove this fact. Thank you.

Yet, we disagree with you when you claim that material abundance was not another reason for these wars. We will not allow you to conceal this obvious fact because you yourself have unintentionally alluded to it when you listed the reasons for the invasion of Egypt—among them were "the abundance of Egypt and its yields". More than that, ponder what the Qur'an says in Chapter 48 :20:

"Allah (God) promises you much booty that you will capture" (Qur'an).

Or let us listen to Muhammad's explicit statement in which he (after exhorting his warriors to fight bravely) promised the plunder of the country. Did you forget, Dr. Abu Zayd, what Muhammad said? Let me remind you. Muhammad said,

"You see, God will soon make you inherit their land, their treasures and make you sleep with their women" (Lit: make their women's beds for you).

These plain, disgraceful words are recorded by Ibn Hisham on page 182 Vol. II, of his famous book, "Al Rod Al Anf", which all the researchers regard as a reliable reference. Thus, when Muslims invaded a certain land incited by the desire to possess the land, treasures, and women, they were actually fulfilling God's promise as it was stated in the Qur'an and in Muhammad's pledge.

"The Beginning and the End," by Ibn Kathir (vol. 7)

We would like to quote a few incidents from this book by Ibn Kathir who is one of the ancient Muslim scholars and chroniclers and a reliable source for all students of Islamic history. On page 2, we read the following,

"At the inception of the year 13 of the Hajira, Abu Bakr was determined to draft soldiers to send them to Syria in compliance with the words of the Qur'an: Fight... those who were given the Scripture (Chapter 9:9); and also follow the example of the apostle of God who gathered the Muslims together to invade Syria before his death."

He also adds on page 9:

"When Abu Bakr sent Khalid to Iraq, Abu Hurayra, who was one of Muhammad's companions, he used to exhort Muslims to fight by telling them: 'Hasten to the Houris' (fair, black-eyed women)."

Those Houris are the nymphs of paradise who are particularly designated for the enjoyment of Muslims.

"'The Blood of the Byzantine is more delicious', Khalid said!"

On page 10, Ibn Khathir tells us that when the Byzantine leaders rejected Islam or paying tribute, Khalid told them,

"We are people who drink blood. We were told that there is no blood that is more delicious than the blood of the Byzantines."

Such words well suit people like Khalid, Muhammad's beloved friend and relative.

On page 13 we read the following,

"Gregorius, one of the great princes of the Byzantines, said to Khalid: 'What do you call us for?' Khalid answered him: 'That you testify that there is no God but the only God and that Muhammad is His messenger and apostle, and to acknowledge all that Muhammad received from God (namely pilgrimage, fasting of Ramadan, etc.).' Gregorius said to him: 'And if these are not accepted?' Khalid responded, 'Then pay the tribute.' Gregorius said to him: 'If we do not give the tribute?' Khalid said: 'Then war!'"

Ibn Kathir acknowledges (on page 21) that when the Muslims conquered Damascus, they **seized St. John's church** and converted it into the largest mosque in Damascus today (The Umayyad Mosque). On page 55, we read also about the **invasion of Jerusalem**. On page 123, he states,

"Umar Ibn al-Khattab wrote to Abdil-Rahman Ibn Rabi'a ordering him to invade the Turks (Turkey today)."

The Second Invasion of Africa

In page 165 Ibn Kathir records for us that:

"The second invasion of Africa was accomplished because its people broke their pledge. That was in year 33 of the Hajira (The Moslem Calendar)."

Of course, the people of Africa broke the pledge because that pledge was imposed on them by force in lieu of death. Yet Muslims killed thousands of them. Ibn Kathir already mentioned in page 151 that,

"Uthman Ibn 'Affan ordered 'Abdalla Ibn Sa'd to invade Africa. [He told him] 'If you conquer it take 1/25 of its booty.' 'Abdalla Ibn Sa'd marched towards it at the head of an army of 20,000 soldiers. He conquered it and killed multitudes of people from among its inhabitants until the remnant were converted to Islam and became subject to the Arabs. 'Abdalla took his portion of the booty as 'Uthman told him, then he divided the rest."

How unfortunate were the African people! They were invaded by the Arabs who killed thousands of them, divided the booty, and forced the remnant to embrace Islam. When they broke the pact, the Muslims attacked them again. **But are the black African people the only unfortunate people?** Or are all the people of Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Libya, all the Arab tribes, Spain, even the people of China and India, Cyprus and the Kurds, all the unfortunate peoples? All of these are unfortunate nations who became the victims of Islamic Law which detests human rights and persistently ignores their freedom.

The Invasion of Cyprus and the Kurds

Ibn Kathir tells us that in the year 28 of the Hajira, the conquest of Cyprus was accomplished after 'Abdulla Ibn al-Zubayr slaughtered a multitude of people—as usual. Ibn Khaldun also tells the story of the Kurds. In page 124 of Vol. II, he says,

"Muslims met a number of Kurds. They called them to embrace Islam or pay the tribute. When they refused to do so they killed them and captured their women and children, then divided the booty."

As we see, Ibn Khaldun along with Ibn Kathir, al-Tabari and other chroniclers, ancient and contemporary such as Dr. Abu Zayd, recorded all the Islamic historical events in detail. Moreover, on every occasion Arab newspapers allude boastfully to these memorial episodes of Islamic history and shed light on these savage, wild offensive wars. For instance, we read in the prestigious Ahram newspaper which is published in Egypt, the following,

"During the era of the Caliph 'Umar Ibn 'Abdul-'Aziz, Ibn Qutayba in the year 88H, he invaded some of the neighboring countries of Iran such as Bukhara, and Samarq and marched close to the **Chinese border**" (refer to the Ahram, Mary 26, 1986, p. 13).

In his book, "The Beginning and the End" (part 9), Ibn Kathir narrates in detail the history of this belligerent general, Ibn Qutayba. He records the story of his campaigns and refers to his biography.

We would like to conclude this chapter with a brief summary which Taqiy al-Din al-Nabahani presents in his book, "The Islamic State" (pp. 121 and 122). He summarizes the history of Islamic offensive wars against the neighboring peaceful countries by saying,

"Muhammad had begun to send troops and initiate campaigns against the Syrian borders such as the campaign of Mu'ta and Tabuk. Then the rightly guided caliphs ruled after him and the conquest continued. (The Arabs) conquered Iraq, Persia, and Syria whose faith was Christianity and which were inhabited by the Syrians, Armenians, some Jews and some Byzantines. Then Egypt and North Africa were conquered. When the Umayyad took over after the rightly guided caliphs, they conquered the Sind, Khawarizm, and Samarqand. They annexed them to the lands of the Islamic state."

According to all Muslim chroniclers, it is well documented that Armenia and Morocco were conquered during the era of 'Abdul-Malik Ibn Marwan. When his son, al-Walid, assumed the throne, he invaded India and Andalusia.

Also, Dr. 'Afifi Abdul-Fattah, the Muslim scholar, encapsulates the whole principle in a few explicit, straightforward words, as he says (page 382 of his famous book "The Spirit of the Islamic Religion"),

"Islam has acknowledged war in order to exalt the word of God. This is a fight for God's cause."

He also adds in p. 390,

"Before the Islamic state declares war against another state, it should give (the other state) the choice between Islam, tribute or war."

We need not say anything more than that. Maybe this is what Muslims mean when they say, "We believe in human freedom and man's right to choose according to his own will! We present him with three options, and he has the right to choose as he wishes — either to become a Muslim and pay alms to the Caliph of the Muslims, or pay the tribute and submit to Islamic rule, or we kill him."

Let the reader ponder the Muslim contradiction that a man has **the right to choose** whatever he wants within the Islamic context of individual freedom.

Conclusion

These are the Islamic offensive wars, my dear reader. We have already surveyed the Qur'anic verses which were expounded by both the great ancient and the contemporary Muslim scholars. We also alluded to the sayings of Muhammad, his own deeds and his orders to his companions, relatives and successors. We witnessed the bloody events of Islamic history narrating for us what Muslims did after the death of Muhammad and how they carried out his orders and the commandments of the Qur'an—how they fought with the People of the Book, the Jew and the Christian, until they paid tribute with humiliation and defeat. We have witnessed how they plundered the lands, killed the unfortunate, and captured women and children for no reason.

Moreover, we have already discussed all the matters pertaining to the death penalty of an apostate who dares to relinquish the Islamic faith and to embrace another religion, or to become an atheist. We also referred to an abundance of evidences and interpretations of Muslim scholars along with the deeds and sayings of Muhammad in this respect. He himself gave orders to kill anyone who is an apostate from Islam such as Umm Mirwan as the Azhar and all the Chroniclers denoted, and all those apostates who fled to Mecca.

Regarding offensive wars or imposing the Islamic religion on people by war, Muhammad said: "I was commanded to fight people until they say there is no God but the only God, and Muhammad is the apostle of God, and they perform all the Islamic ordinances and rituals."

We also examined Muhammad's attitude towards the apostate. He made it clear that the apostate must be sentenced to death. He said about those who relinquish Islam: "Whoever changes his faith...kill him!"

Muhammad indicated that it is unlawful to shed the blood of a Muslim except in three cases: Unbelief after belief, adultery after integrity (or being married) and killing a soul without any right. The first case refers to the death penalty of the apostate and the oppression of his freedom and right to embrace any religion other than Islam. Those are the clear claims of the Islamic religion as well as of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, who always uttered at the beginning of every prayer or sermon, the following phrase,

"In the name of Allah—the Compassionate, the Merciful!"

We talked about individual freedom and human rights! This is the prophet of freedom, mercy, tolerance and human dignity!

Has the veil been removed?

Is the deception over?

Judge for yourself.